

## **Narrative Description for Tobacco Sold to Minors, California, 1997-2014**

The table shows the percentage of stores that sold tobacco to minors in the California Youth Tobacco Purchase Survey each year from 1997 to 2014. This annual survey of illegal sales of tobacco products to minors is conducted to gauge the rate of illegal tobacco sales across California and to comply with the California Stop Tobacco Access to Kids Enforcement (STAKE) Act. All states and territories in the United States are required to assess their rate of illegal sales of tobacco to youth, pursuant to the Federal Synar Amendment. The California Department of Public Health, Food and Drug Branch, conducts ongoing illegal sales enforcement operations separately from this annual survey.

A simple random sample of tobacco retail stores that are accessible to youth throughout the state is selected for the survey, using the list of licensed tobacco retailers provided by the California Board of Equalization. Youth ages 15-16 attempt to buy cigarettes in approximately 750 stores each year. Stores that do not allow youth to enter, such as bars, casinos, and clubs, and stores that require a membership or fee to enter are considered "inaccessible" and are excluded from the survey. Youth do not carry identification, do not attempt to look older or younger than their actual age, and are truthful if the store clerk asks their age.

Caution should be used when comparing this statewide Youth Tobacco Purchase Survey rate to county or city illegal sales rates to minors; comparisons may be misleading due to differences in the sampling and data collection protocols, such as the types of stores included, the age of the youth decoys, whether the youth carry identification, and whether they are truthful if asked their age.